

Thawing Times

Allow 24 hours for every 5 pounds.

8 to 12 pounds	1 to 2 days
12 to 16 pounds	2 to 3 days
16 to 20 pounds	3 to 4 days
20 to 24 pounds	4 to 5 days

Allow 30 minutes per pound.

8 to 12 pounds	4 to 6 hours
12 to 16 pounds	6 to 8 hours
16 to 20 pounds	8 to 10 hours
20 to 24 pounds	10 to 12 hours

Approximate **325°F** Cooking Times

4 to 6 pound breast	1 1/2 to 2 1/4 hours
6 to 8 pound breast	2 1/4 to 3 1/4 hours
8 to 12 pounds	2 3/4 to 3 hours
12 to 14 pounds	3 to 3 3/4 hours
14 to 18 pounds	3 3/4 to 4 1/4 hours
18 to 20 pounds	4 1/4 to 4 1/2 hours
20 to 24 pounds	4 1/2 to 5 hours

8 to 12 pounds	3 to 3 1/2 hours
12 to 14 pounds	3 1/2 to 4 hours
14 to 18 pounds	4 to 4 1/4 hours
18 to 20 pounds	4 1/4 to 4 3/4 hours
20 to 24 pounds	4 3/4 to 5 1/4 hours

U.S. Food Safety and Inspection Service



ML-018006 MAC 9/00

A GUIDE TO Holiday Turkey Preparation

Preparing a delicious turkey dinner is a holiday tradition. These guidelines are provided to help you prepare your dinner safely and reduce the risk of contamination that may cause foodborne illness.

Store It Safe

- Plan to cook a fresh turkey within 2 days.
- Store turkey in freezer immediately after purchase or store in a pan on the bottom shelf of refrigerator.

Thaw It Safe

Always wash your hands before and after handling raw poultry.

- Thaw in refrigerator at 45°F.
Place turkey in a pan to prevent the juice dripping onto other foods.
- Thaw under cold running water.
- Thaw in microwave.

Turkey left on the counter to thaw allows the bacteria to grow rapidly on the outside while the inside is still defrosting. This is not a safe food handling practice.



Prepare It *Safe*

You can never wash your hands too many times. Washing hands prevents bacteria from transferring (cross contamination) from your hands to the turkey. Be sure the cutting board and preparation surfaces have been cleaned with warm soapy water.

- Wash turkey and remove any giblets/parts. *(These may have been wrapped in paper.)*
- **The safest practice is to cook stuffing separately, outside of the turkey.** If you choose to cook the stuffing in the turkey, allow for extra cooking time.

Safety Tip:

Mix stuffing just before it goes into the turkey.

Stuffing Properly:

The turkey should be stuffed loosely, about 3/4 cup of stuffing per pound.

Pre-stuffed Frozen Turkeys:

Follow the manufacturer's instructions and cook to an internal minimum of 165°F.

Remember: When reheating leftovers, always reheat them to 165°F or higher. Bring gravy to a rolling boil.



Cook It *Safe*

Roasting is the recommended method for cooking tender meats.

- Set oven no lower than 325°F. Preheating is not necessary. Lower oven temperatures may not kill bacteria.
- Be sure turkey is completely defrosted.

The temperature chart on back is based on a fresh or thawed bird at a refrigerated temperature of 45°F.

- Place turkey, breast side up, on a flat wire rack in a shallow roasting pan 2 to 2 1/2 inches deep.

Use a meat thermometer to check for safety and doneness. **Turkey, gravy, giblets and stuffing must reach an internal temperature of 165°F.** Take the temperature of the turkey where the meat is the thickest. Bacteria that may cause foodborne illness are destroyed at 165°F.

- In the absence of a meat thermometer, pierce an unstuffed turkey with a fork in several places; juices should be clear with no trace of pink.

Smoking Turkey

Smoked turkey meat may turn pink during the cooking process. To insure doneness, use a probe thermometer to be sure the temperature is 165°F or above. Juices should be clear.

Chill It *Safe*

- Cut turkey into smaller portions.
- Store dressing and leftovers in shallow containers.
- Refrigerate to 45°F or less promptly or freeze.